

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news.

## Pharmacy Connect 60DD

THE Pharmacy Connect Conference will shine a spotlight on the 60-day dispensing policy, which takes effect on Fri 01 Sep, coinciding with the first day of the much-anticipated industry event.

Pharmacy accountant Trent Ruprecht, pharmacy finance broker Richard Gorman, and Guild National President Professor Trent Twomey will discuss the policy's impact on community pharmacy during two panel discussions on Fri, including how pharmacies need to adapt.

To register for the event, which is being held at the Hyatt Regency Sydney starting tomorrow, [CLICK HERE](#).

## MedAdvisor profits up, losses reduced

**MEDICATION** management platform, MedAdvisor Limited, has posted its FY23 results, with increased revenue and gross profit leading to a loss reduction.

The business, with operations in the US and UK as well as Australia, recorded revenue of \$98 million, a 44.6% increase on the \$67.8 million in the 2022 financial year, while also achieving gross profit of \$59.4 million, up 69.7% from the \$35.4 million of FY22.

The business managed to reduce its FY22 loss of \$8.3 million to a loss of \$3 million last financial year, a result it put down to gross margin improvement, cost savings and scale benefits.

Improvements due to a shift in product mix to digital medication awareness programs and significant expansion in digital patient reach were partly lauded as the reason for the reduced EBITDA loss.

CEO and MD Rick Ratliff (pictured) said, "MedAdvisor has built robust foundations with



prospects for significant growth opportunities, enabling us to drive profitable EBITDA growth in FY24 and sustainable growth in the years ahead.

"I am confident that our strategic initiatives will continue to drive our success as we navigate the path ahead," he added.

Furthermore, MedAdvisor outlined the successful integration of GuildLink pharmacy and the

implementation of restructuring measures being completed on time and within budget, resulting in expected annualised cost savings of approximately \$2 million.

The business flagged a restructuring of employee costs for FY24 would result in a 20% headcount loss.

There was a one-off cost of \$1.4 million in FY23 for redundancies in the US and Australia.

## AI could revolutionise MS treatment

THE use of cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology could lead to improved treatment for people living with multiple sclerosis (MS), according to new research funded by MS Australia.

A research team at the University of Sydney, led by Dr Heidi Beadnall, will explore how the latest advances in AI and imaging tech can improve diagnostic tools for MS.

According to MS Australia, "AI-driven analysis can eliminate the time-consuming manual process and enable the extraction of significantly more information from MRI scans", including brain lesion number, lesion volumes and brain volumes.

Improved diagnostic tools will assist neurologists in assessing the effectiveness of MS treatments and enable early intervention if necessary.

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## New plan for \$50 million in MRFF funding

THE Federal Department of Health and Aged Care has released a new Primary Health Research Plan that will shape \$50 million in funding from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

Designed by an independent expert advisory panel chaired by Professor Jane Gunn, the plan acknowledged that there were increasing difficulties in accessing primary healthcare for many Australians.

The plan aims to alleviate the issues by focusing on person-centred care using a team-based multidisciplinary approach.

“We want our most creative minds to think about how we put equity at the centre of primary healthcare in this country,” Gunn said.

“What are new models of care that might work? We’re not expecting there is a single answer.

“There will be different approaches that could happen in rural or regional areas, compared with metropolitan areas.”



According to the plan, its primary objectives are to “transform primary care access, equity, safety and efficiency through primary-care-led research that improves health outcomes and patient experience, and contribute to a sustainable and thriving workforce”.

It will do this across three priority areas of research investment: patient access to multi-disciplinary team-based care, integrated health services for the provision of patient centred care, and the use of data to improve patient care.

Fifty million dollars over four

years from 2023-24 has been allocated for the Research Plan, including up to \$30 million over four years from 2024-25 from the MRFF’s Emerging Priorities and Consumer-Driven Research (EPCDR) initiative, and up to \$20 million over two years starting 2025-26 from the MRFF’s Primary Health Care Research initiative.

Gunn said, “I hope researchers will be excited by this plan.

“With their engagement we can realise our ambition to revitalise primary healthcare.”

The full plan can be viewed [HERE](#).

## Review finalised

THE final version of the *Review of the Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy (EFC) Funding Arrangements* has been received by The Department of Health and Aged Care.

Included in the final report is an examination of the impact and continued sustainability of the current EFC Program and associated practices across the cancer medicines supply chain.

It was created with the aid of 29 submissions representing 32 contributing organisations and individual stakeholders received after the release of the interim report in Sep 2022.

One such finding was an insufficient basis to support changes to the current EFC fees, while additional fee components could be considered in the long-term to address changes in pharmacy practices to minimise waste.

The full report is available to read [HERE](#).

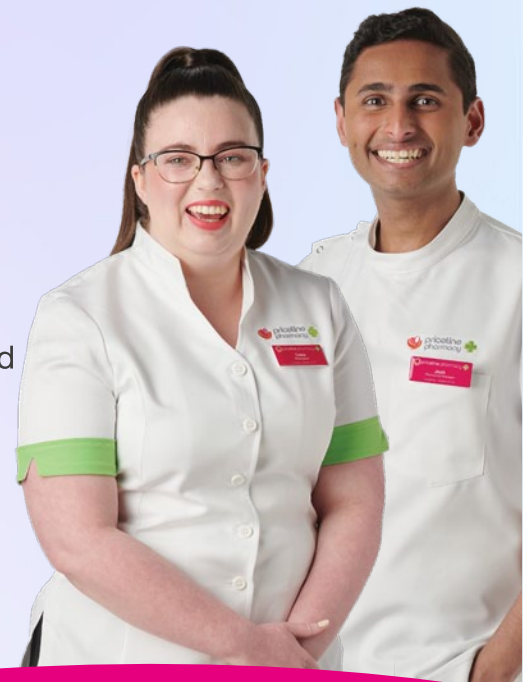
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\*Priceline Pharmacy retail units sales 1 Jul - 31 Dec 2022.  
^2022 Priceline Pharmacy data.

### TGA issues fines

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has recently handed out fines to both Nius Development and EmpireLabz Australia.

Nius Development were issued two infringement notices totalling \$26,640 for the alleged unlawful import of unapproved cosmetic injectable products.

The TGA alleged that the company attempted to import medical devices containing prescription-only substances, without approval or authority.

It also issued seven infringement notices totalling \$115,500 to EmpireLabz Australia for the alleged unlawful advertising and supply of sport supplement products not included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG).

The products were found to contain banned substances and prescription-only ingredients.

### Early career award open

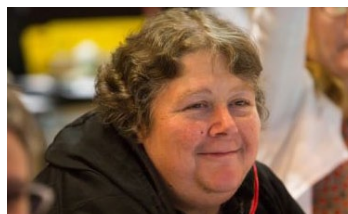
ENTRIES into the Early Career Pharmacy Educator Award, part of the Dr Erica Sainsbury Awards, are now open.

The award looks to recognise both non-pharmacist and pharmacist educators, tutors and work integrated learning (WIL) practice supervisors who, at the time of application, have been engaged with an accredited pharmacy degree program or Intern Training Program for at least one year.

To be eligible, applicants must have no more than five years teaching experience in a higher education institution, including tutoring and part-time teaching, and the five years can be non-sequential.

Applicants who are health professionals regulated under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) must not have a condition on their registration.

To enter, applicants must submit a 500-word statement that illustrates



how they meet two out of eight criteria, as well as provide a confidential referee.

The Award, along with the Dr Erica Sainsbury Pharmacist Supervisor Award, was established to honour Dr Erica Sainsbury (pictured) for the legacy she left in pharmacy education.

Dr Sainsbury, who passed away in Dec 2021, had a teaching career that spanned more than 30 years at the School of Pharmacy, University of Sydney.

She also worked closely with the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) to develop accreditation standards, complete and publish several expansive literature reviews.

Entries close 29 Sep - see [HERE](#).

### Test & treat trial

US PHARMACY chain

Walmart has launched Testing and Treatment, a new program that lets its pharmacists test customers for strep throat, flu and COVID-19 before treating them directly.

The program allows patients to receive testing and quick treatment in one place, with the solution now available at Walmart pharmacies across 12 US states.

Test and Treatment is available on a walk-in basis by simply engaging with a pharmacist, or alternatively, patients can use the Walmart app to make an appointment.

Walmart pharmacist John Ulrey said, "pharmacists are starting to fill an important gap in the medical field...it's going to change how pharmacists are thought of in the community".

Prices currently start at US\$133 depending on the service provided.

## Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

### The latest in pharmacy robotic automation

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## Dispensary Corner

**SUFFERING** from a dry cough, fever, night sweats and abdominal pain? It could be a parasitic roundworm nestled in your brain.

At least it was for one 64-year-old Australian woman who recently had an *Ophidascaris robertsi* roundworm extracted after brain surgery.

The patient was first admitted to hospital in Jan 2021 after suffering three weeks of abdominal pain and diarrhoea.

In 2022 and now experiencing forgetfulness and depression, she was sent in for an MRI scan where a neurosurgeon at Canberra Hospital found an abnormality in the right frontal lobe of her brain.

It was then that the doctors discovered the still live and wriggling eight-centimetre roundworm nestled in her brain.

Dr Hari Priya Bandi pulled the worm from the patient after surgery, a feat which colleague Dr Sanjaya Senanayake called a "once-in-a-career finding".

Sanjaya told *The Guardian* in an interview, "Canberra is a small place, so we sent the worm, which was still alive, straight to the laboratory of a CSIRO scientist who is very experienced with parasites.

"He just looked at it and said, 'Oh my goodness, this is *Ophidascaris robertsi*'."

It's believed the patient caught the roundworm after collecting Warrigal greens, a native grass, beside a lake near her home where a python had shed the parasite via its faeces.

Greens aren't always great.

## PAG celebrates suppliers



**INDEPENDENT** pharmacy network The Platform Alliance Group (PAG) has launched its new Impact Awards to recognise supplier partnership excellence, during its annual Partnership Forum in Melbourne on Thur 24 Sep.

Awards were given out in seven categories, with supplier partners nominated by PAG pharmacy members.

Haleon took home the prestigious Supplier Partner of the Year 2023, while other winners included Bayer, Total Beauty Network, Metagenics, WyMedical, and AFT.

PAG also recognised the contribution of individual supplier

representatives, with Arrortex Pharmaceuticals' Melissa Garrett receiving the Key Account Manager of the Year Award, "for her efforts in going above and beyond for member pharmacies".

Addressing 140 supplier guests at the event, PAG CEO Dave Fenlon said, "we greatly appreciate the support of supplier partners in our second year".

"Many of our partners have faced a year of volatility on many fronts.

"Working through this together will strengthen our partnerships, and I look forward to achieving our shared goals in 2024."

**Pictured:** PAG award winners.

## New funding plan for diabetes and CVD

**THE** Department of Health and Aged Care has released a new plan for \$77.5 million in funding from the Medical Research Future Fund to improve care and outcomes for people with diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

In the plan are calls for building increased knowledge of the causes of diabetes and CVD, as

well as new ways to predict who is at risk of diabetes and CVD and their complications.

Professor John Prins, who was part of the Expert Advisory Panel that created the plan said, "these chronic diseases cause severe illness and death. But healthcare services are not uniform across Australia for people living with these diseases."

## Polio detection

**THE** time it takes to detect polio can be halved, thanks to a technique called Direct molecular Detection and Nanopore Sequencing (DDNS).

New research supported by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) showed that DDNS tests done over a six-month period were 23 days faster on average than the standard method, with an accuracy rate of more than 99%.

The technique enables stool samples to be tested in the country where the outbreak began instead of being sent to specialist laboratories abroad.

As a result, lengthy transport times are cut and delays in detection are reduced, allowing authorities to respond faster to outbreaks.

Similar techniques have been used to detect COVID-19, Ebola, measles and monkeypox.

## Boots in breach

**BRITISH** retailer and pharmacy chain Boots has removed four paid Google ads promoting baby formula, after the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) found it in breach of advertising rules.

The retail giant "apologised for the error" after violating a UK ad code, which prohibits marketing communications for infant formula aimed at the general public.

A spokesperson for Boots told the watchdog that the ads were a result of "human error", and that it "immediately" pulled the baby formula products from its paid media marketing.